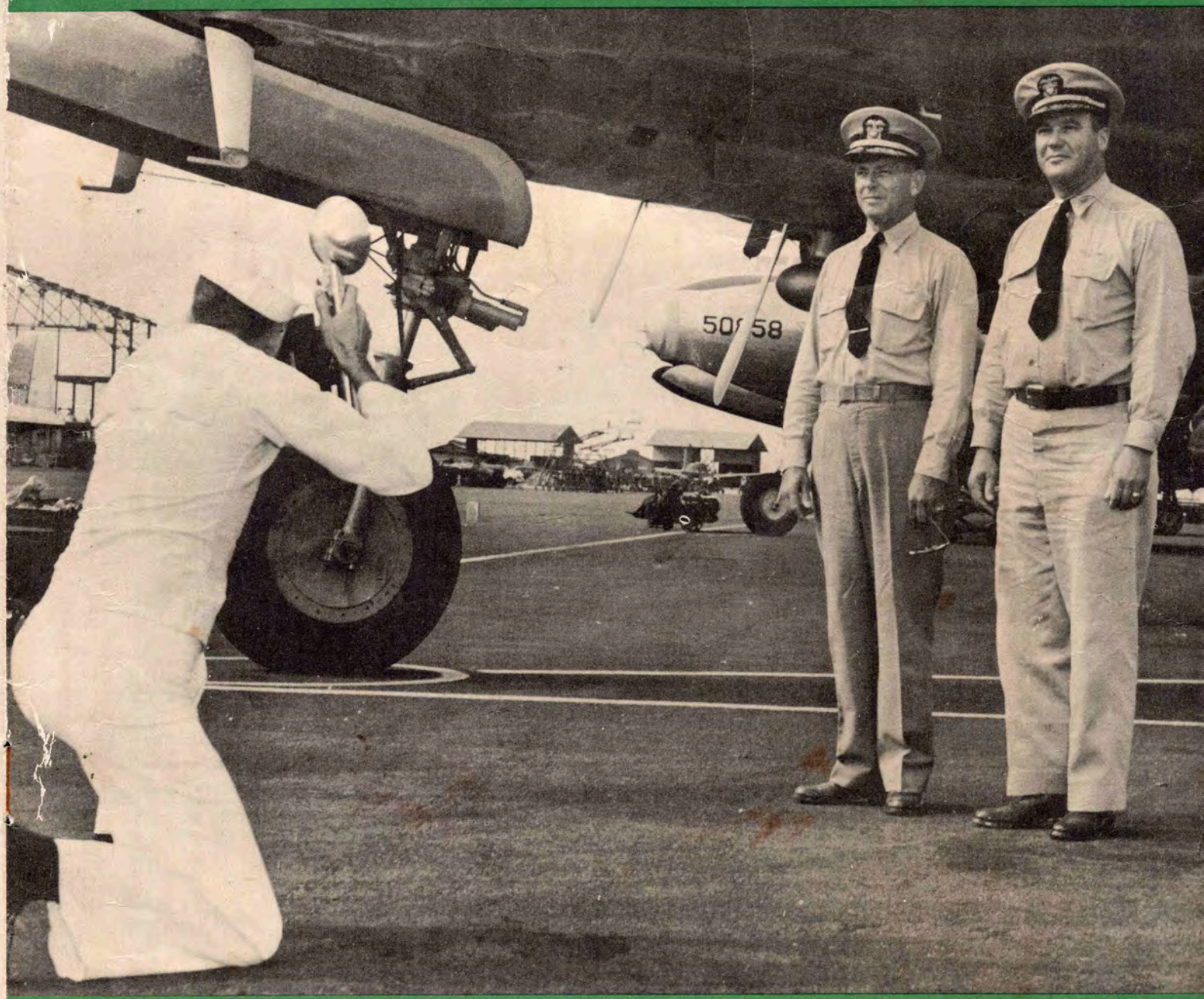
NATS PACKET



PUBLISHED BY VR-12 FOR NAVAL AIR TRANSPORT SERVICE, PACIFIC

MARCH 1945

THIS MONTH

IT'S NOT OFTEN . . .

. . . that a monthly magazine is able to break a big scoop, but we really have one this time. Those of us who have been with NATS during its unprecedented growth could not help but foresee that the story was as inevitable as the disintegration of totalitarian conquest, and the Packet now has the privilege of carrying the first official word, which you will find on the page to your right.

Yes, NATS has been elevated from a division of CNO to full command status, with its own admiral. And if the Pacific Wing's place in this reorganization is larger, it's because NATSLant has done its job so well in aiding the control of the European situation that still more attention can now be turned to the Pacific.

We welcome the enlarged scope of our mission and feel that it is a natural sequence to the record of our past. We're no longer groping; our strides are sure and firm. And as the smoke of each successive battle clears, nearer and nearer Japan, you'll find a NATS plane there on the job---until we come to the end of the line: NATS Unit Tokio!

SUMMING UP . . .

. . . the record of the NATS Pacific Wing for 1944, recently published figures reveal that during the past calendar year NATSPac's aerial transports flew 28,572,000 miles---a distance of more than 1140 trips around the world.

Scheduled miles flown during December showed a 200-percent increase over the corresponding total for January of last year. Miles flown the first and last months of 1944 were 1,370,610 and 4,177,288, respectively. The June figure was 2,238,095.

Passenger miles flown in the 12-month period were 312,590,187. This category showed better than a 300-percent increase from 11,593,463 in January, as compared with 48,837,222 in December.

Total mail, cargo and passenger ton-miles carried last year, as NATSPac sped urgently needed loads to the fleet at advanced battle fronts, amounted to 102,463,404.

Mail and cargo ton-miles in the same period climbed from 2,967,612 in January to 10,351,275 in December. The 1944 total was 66,533,160 ton-miles.

Passenger ton-miles flown totaled 35,935,244, starting with 1,304,263 in January and climbing to 5,655,149 in the last month of the year.

THE SPACE . . .

. . . that magazines, periodicals and newspapers are giving to NATS is growing by leaps and bounds. The January issue of "American Aviation" devotes six pages to NATSPac and its activities; "Naval Aviation News" of January 15 summarizes NATS' growth in operations during 1944; "Paradise of the Pacific" for February tells of the vital role in logistics that NATS is playing; and many others join in paying tribute.

And from columnists and war correspondents come glowing praise. Ernie Pyle recently devoted a column to NATS, and Wayne W. Parrish, Aviation Editor for "Liberty," who wrote the article in "American Aviation," has written several others, along with personal letters to the command.

And speaking of personal letters, Barbara Miller Finch, female war correspondent, wrote to Lt.Comdr. W.W. Hicks, of Staff, last month to express her appreciation for service rendered her aboard NATS planes. When a flight orderly took it upon himself to furnish her with a blanket and later made toast for her without a toaster, she said it was her idea of NATS service "beyond the call of duty."

Mrs. Finch's husband, also a war correspondent, has done 10,000 miles with NATS. "He's six feet one," she wrote, "and says a NATS plane is the only one where he can stretch his legs!"

FOR TEAMWORK . . .

. . . in getting a contract-operated trip into the air only one hour and 32 minutes after the plane was released for loading, L. E. Milton, ACMM, gassing crew chief, and J. L. Fruhwirth, S2c, heading the loading crew, have received letters of commendation.

This outstanding feat, accomplished in the midst of other scheduled requirements, was commended by Mr. W. J. Mullahey, PAA Section Superintendent, in a letter to Lt. Comdr. M. L. Hoblit, VR-12 skipper, who forwarded the letter with his congratulations.

ON THE COVER . . .

. . . ComNATS and ComNATSPac. Adm. Reeves and Capt. Tomlinson snapped by George Happy, PhoMlc.

THE NATS PACKET, MAGAZINE OF THE NAVAL AIR TRANSPORT SERVICE, PACIFIC

VOL. I MARCH, 1945 NO. 6

Published monthly, with the approval of the Secretary of the Navy, for NATSPac personnel by the Welfare Department of Air Transport Squadron Twelve, Fleet Post Office, San Francisco, Calif.; and printed by the Air Navigation Office, Navy 29.

Material in the NATS Packet has been cleared for publication by the Pacific Fleet Chief Censor, and the magazine may be sent to the States.

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MARCH 1945 NATS PACKET

Typical of the scenes in which NATSPac's new units operate: a hangar and mat against ice-capped peaks.

NATS HAS COMMAND STATUS

ATLANTIC AND PACIFIC WINGS ABSORB WEST COAST IN REORGANIZATION

THE NAVAL AIR TRANSPORT SERVICE has come of age. No longer a CNO division, NATS has been changed to command status.

Rear Admiral John W. Reeves, Jr., USN, has assumed command of the entire organization under the title of ComNATS, and will set up his headquarters in the San Francisco area.

Under Admiral Reeves will be a Deputy ComNATS and three chiefs of staff, each with the rank of captain, for administration, operations and liaison with other commands in Washington.

It is expected that Captain J. P. Whitney, USN, formerly CNO(NATS), will become deputy; that Captain P. E. Richter, USNR, will be chief of staff for operations, and that Captain C. K. Wildman, USNR, formerly ComNATSLant, will be chief of staff in Washington.

In the reorganization of NATS into two transport wings, NATSWestCoast has been absorbed into the Atlantic and Pacific wings. VR-4, maintenance squadron, and VR-5, operating squadron, joined NATSPac, under Captain D. W. Tomlinson, USNR, in mid-February. VR-3, transcontinental operating squadron, became part of NATSLant.

The Atlantic Wing will be under the command of Captain J.E. Dyer, USN, formerly ComNATSWestCoast. The ferry squadrons, commanded by Captain John W. King, USN, comprise the third NATS wing.

In the last two years, NATS has grown from 2500 officers and men and 95 planes to a personnel of 18,000 and 400 aircraft, which operate over more than 75,000 miles of routes.

General Order No. 213, which has been signed by the Secretary of the Navy, lists NATS as one of the ten separate organizational parts of the United States Naval Forces.

Direct Destiny of NATS Pacific

SOLIDLY BEHIND the new Commander and Deputy Commander of NATS are the leaders of the enlarged Pacific Wing. Combining Navy training with vast civil experience, these transport-wise veterans of NATS are united in a common aim: to fulfill their now greater mission of servicing the Pacific Ocean Area.

REAR ADMIRAL J. W. REEVES, JR., USN
ComNATS

CAPTAIN J. P. WHITNEY, USN
Deputy ComNATS

CAPTAIN D.W. TOMLINSON, USNR
ComNATSPac

COMDR. D.L. MESKER, USNR
C.O., VR-2

COMDR. K.B. HAUGEN, USNR
C.O., VR-4

COMDR. H.C. HOLLENBECK, USNR
C.O., VR-5

LT.COMDR. J.R. MACKROTH,
USN, C.O., VR-10

COMDR. W.F. PETERSON,
USNR, C.O., VR-11

LT.COMDR. M. L. HOBLIT,
USNR, C.O., VR-12

COMDR. V. A. DORRELL,
USNR, C.O., VR-13

ADMIRAL REEVES LONG ACQUAINTED WITH WORK OF NATS

ON JANUARY 18, at his headquarters on the island of Peleliu, Rear Admiral John W. Reeves, Jr., USN, learned by dispatch that his new assignment would be duty as the first Commander, Naval Air Transport Service. He may have reflected upon the days in 1942 when, as one of the youngest rear admirals in the U. S. Navy, he was Commander of the Aleutians Section and had learned to know and rely upon the NATS planes landing at his headquarters in Kodiak and at Dutch Harbor.

In the Aleutians he had posed for a picture with the late Captain LaHache, who was at that time ComNATSPac, in the days before the three-wing organization of the past two years had been completed.

If he wondered exactly to what extent NATS in the Pacific had developed during those two years, he soon discovered at first hand. A VR-11 R5D brought the Admiral and members of his staff to Honolulu, where many of NATS personnel saw him informally acquainting himself with the facilities of VR-10, VR-11 and VR-12.

Early in the war, Admiral Reeves commissioned the aircraft carrier USS Wasp and was on her bridge when she twice carried British fighter planes into the Mediterranean and launched them to relieve hard-pressed Malta.

A graduate of the Naval Academy, Class of 1911, he was appointed to the two-star rank in May, 1942. His next duty after the Aleutians assignment was commanding a division of carriers which participated in the strikes on New Guinea, Truk and Palau. Then, as Commander, Western Carolines Sub Area, he did much in preparation for the Philippine strikes and Leyte landings.

Admiral Reeves has an outstanding record as a developer of air-sea rescue work. He inaugurated sending out PBY "Dumbos" with striking forces and made many refinements in rescue techniques.

Our Naval Aviator Admiral is very much interested in recreation and welfare. When he discovered that men on a carrier had been ashore only a day and a half in six months, he took steps to remedy the situation. In the Ulithi group he had extensive recreational facilities built, and he saw to it that a large number of men got ashore every day when conditions permitted.

WAY UP YONDER---In the land of Eskimos is this runway of packed snow for VR-5 planes. NATSPac's fourth operating squadron adds 5000 miles to the Wing.

NATS PACIFIC NOW IS EXTENDED OVER THIRD OF EARTH'S WIDTH

A LINE 8000 miles long, slanting from Sydney, Australia, to Point Barrow, Alaska, might be considered an axis for NATS-Pacific operations, now that VR-4 and VR-5 have joined the Wing.

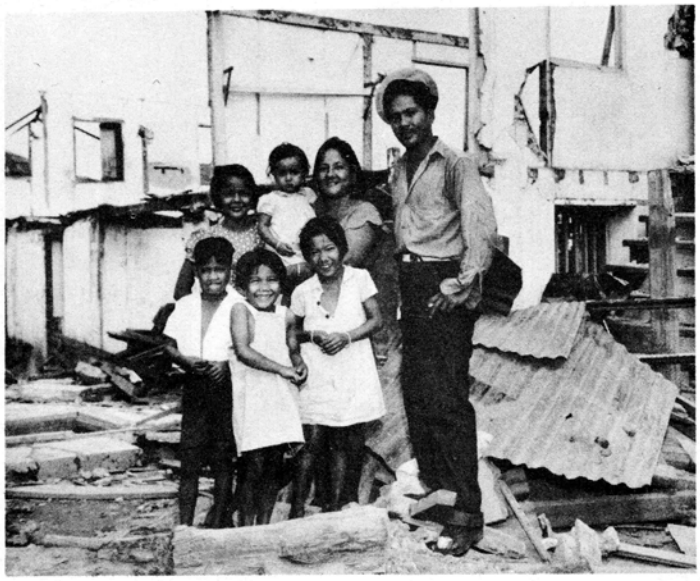
Covering the entire Pacific Ocean area, the NATSPac system now extends over 120 degrees of longitude, a third of the way around the world. Planes of the Pacific Wing fly at geographical extremes---from well above the Arctic Circle to far below the Tropic of Capricorn.

Glacial wastes and snow-capped ranges of Alaska and the Aleutians, the forests and rocky coast of Canada add contrast to the tropical islands which have served as a backdrop for Pacific operations during the past two years.

Based at Seattle, AirTransRon Five sends its R5Ds and R4Ds northward to Adak, Anchorage and Attu. An Alaskan shuttle extends from Kodiak to to Fairbanks, swinging across icebound peaks into remote outposts. Recent flights have been made to Point Barrow on the roof of the world, although such trips are not on a scheduled basis. The northwest units are staffed in the same manner as those on island bases throughout the Pacific.

Southward, VR-5's planes go as far as San Diego, Calif., with principal stops at Oakland and Los Angeles. Altogether, VR-5's routes total some 5000 miles.

AirTransRon Four, the heavy maintenance squadron, is located at Oakland. This squadron has been doing major overhauls on VR-11 aircraft as well as on all planes of VR-5.



REUNION ON GUAM---A native Chamorro, Atanacio Camacho, StM1c, is reunited with his sister after eight years. They stand amid the ruins of their home.

REUNION AT GUAM— CAMACHO FINDS FAMILY

THE MARIANAS ISLANDS are thousands of miles away from home to every NATSman stationed there ---that is, to all except Atanacio Camacho, StM1c, USN. It's home, sweet home to him, and when he visited Guam in November, he was reunited with his family for the first time in eight years.

Steward's Mate Camacho is a native Chamorro. Before he joined the Navy in 1937, he lived with his large and happy family of six brothers and four sisters in the town of Agana.

But sadness marred the joy of reunion upon Camacho's return. The 32-year-old sailor found his home in ruins and his family scattered---some of them dead, the rest bewildered and homeless.

"I thought to myself that I would rather have been killed than to come back to this," he muttered to a cousin who had led him to the unrecognizable site of his home.

He found his mother living in a partially rebuilt house with his widowed sister, her two children and three orphans she had found. She did not know where many of the brothers and sisters---all married with families of their own---were living. It took Camacho weeks to find the rest of his family---those who still lived---and piece together the whole heart-rending story.

First, the Japs took everything they had, including the rings on their fingers. Then things grew steadily worse. One brother, a seaman in the Navy Insular Command, became emaciated from months in a prison camp. Another brother was imprisoned as a guerrilla suspect, managing to escape when American shells fell on the stockade.

A third brother was beaten and tortured because it was suspected that he gave aid to Radioman George Tweed, whom the Japs could never capture. A sister was forced to work in a construction crew three days after an operation on a chest infection, the strain proving fatal.

Camacho enlisted in the Navy in 1937 and was with the Atlantic Fleet in 1942, when Guam fell. Two years later, when stationed on Espiritu Santo in the South Pacific, he tried unsuccessfully to volunteer for a landing on Guam.

Finally, at Noumea, Lt. Comdr. John Mackroth, now VR-10 skipper, recommended that Camacho be allowed to visit his home as soon as NATS opened a unit there.

Camacho declares that despite the temporary confusion and chaos the Chamorros know the Americans will take care of them. "There was never any doubt in the minds of my people that the Americans would return and bring again to them freedom, decency and happiness."

MORE WAVE FLIGHT ORDERLIES TRAINED FOR STATESIDE DUTY

WAVE FLIGHT ORDERLIES, having proved their success in the NATS Atlantic Wing, are being assigned to West Coast squadrons for duty, according to "Staff Stuff," NATSLant news organ.

Under the new organization of NATS, the flying ladies will be attached to the NATSPac Wing. There will be 20 of them in the first contingent, under the supervision of Lt.(jg) Helen J. Merrill, former commercial airline hostess.

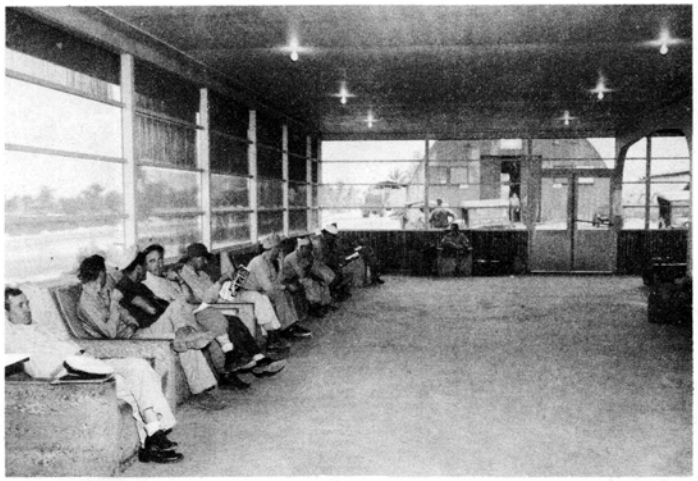
It is expected that 26 more female SpVs will be added from the next graduating class at Hunter College, and that eventually Waves will take over a number of ground transportation billets on the Stateside NATS routes.

Official sources do not anticipate use of Wave flight orderlies for duty "outside the continental limits."

LOGS 203 HOURS

LIEUT. E. C. EASTON of VR-2 did some checking up after he read in the January NATS-PACKET that a VR-11 flight orderly had logged 186 hours. He found that in December VR-2's L. S. Allen, AMMF1c, logged 203 hours. while R. D. Thomas. ARM3c, had 192. The PB2Ys of VR-2 are slower than landplanes, and consequently their crews log more time per trip.

Marianas Modernized



PLACE TO RELAX---A section of the new NATS terminal in the Marianas, showing the screened, spacious and cool waiting room in which transients may relax.

AS IT DOES EVENTUALLY to all NATS units at forward bases, civilization is coming to this NATS landplane unit in the Marianas.

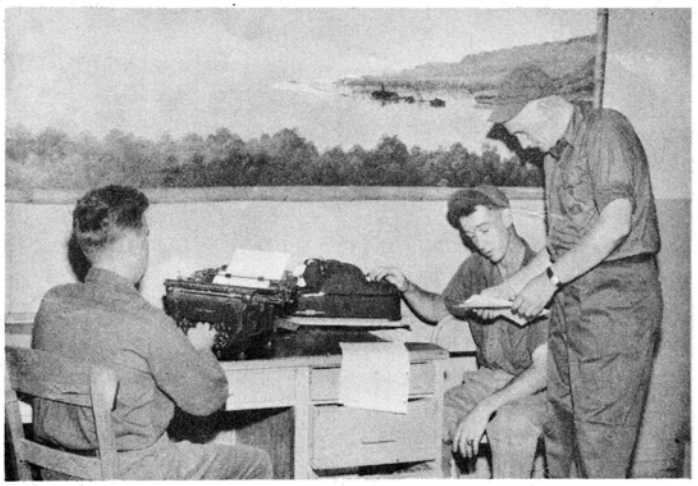
Forerunning comfort's progress there is the brand-new air terminal building shared by NATS with other military air lines.

In a spot where anything other than quonsets, tents and shacks is exceptional, the terminal's modernistic design makes it a mirage come to stay. Open around the clock, the center of rush war travel is symbolic of the speed with which the Navy develops its recently won spearhead bases.

Inside is a cool and shady retreat for waiting passengers. After check-in with NAPO and the NATS transportation desk, they may relax in easy chairs, eat a snack at the canteen, clean up in a wash room with porcelain fixtures---actually! To a traveler from the battle fronts, that's the ultimate in luxury.

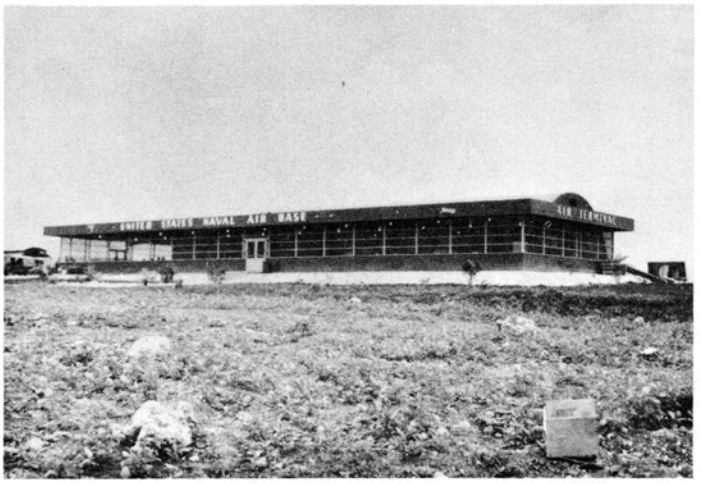
NATS moved in from a cluster of three tattered, leaky tents when the terminal opened in early January. Its compact office adjoins a quonset cargo warehouse in the rear of the building.

Neighboring occupants are Red Cross nurses who staff the canteen in off-duty hours, until regular field service workers arrive. Bamboo trimmings, murals in the background, clean and bright paint work all around add up to another SeaBee-built miracle.



PAPER WORK---NATSmen John Hadsell, SpV2c; Robert McWhinney, Y2c; and Henry Heckman, SpV1c, prepare manifests and forms necessary for an R5D trip.

SNACK BAR---Passengers get acquainted while enjoying a bite to eat at one end of the lengthy canteen counter. Note emblem of ubiquitous Red Cross.



ONCE A BATTLEFIELD---On a crushed-coral mound beside an airfield wrested from the Japs stands the Naval Air Base terminal, which houses NATS and other lines.

MAINTENANCE *Dispatch*

UNKNOWN TO passengers who ride NATS Pac planes, and remote from the flight crews, is the Maintenance Dispatch Division of the AirTransRon Ten Operations Department. Yet this unheralded group of six officers and ten enlisted men provides the coordination and planning it takes to keep NATS-Pacific's planes in mechanical condition to fly some 5,000,000 miles a month.

With Lieut. R. N. (Dick) Thomas, USNR, in charge, the Maintenance Dispatch Division has two functions. The first is a liaison center between the engineering departments of VR-10, Wing maintenance squadron, and the flight operations sections of the administrative and operating squadrons.

The second is long-range aircraft scheduling for specific trips during the month, so that each plane will be fully utilized and yet get the checks and overhauls it must have.

When Flight Control sets up a trip, Maintenance Dispatch decides which plane will make it. It follows through by coordinating the hundreds of little jobs required to have the plane ready for flight. It gets the aircraft released from Engineering, sees that regular and emergency equipment is aboard, installs seats or strips them out for extra cargo space, whatever the case may be. The plane is not out of Maintenance Dispatch's hands until it's turned over to the loading crew of NATS Unit Honolulu.

Even then, Maintenance Dispatch keeps tabs on it, learning of its mechanical performance from smaller check units along the route and estimating the time at which it will be in for another overhaul. Hours and often days ahead, the office can notify Engineering at what time the plane will be in, what type of check it needs, the number of flying hours on the engines, and when it is due out again.

MAINTENANCE DISPATCHERS--Behind the daily flight of NATS planes in the Pacific is the Maintenance Dispatch Office of VR-10, maintenance squadron of the Pacific Wing. Passengers ride the big transports entirely oblivious of this group of officers and enlisted men, shown above, who decide what plane will fly them to their destination. Left to right, they are J. J. Burgess, S1c, C. A. Schwartzenberg, AMM3c, Lieut. R. N. Thomas, department head, D. W. Bagstad, S1c (foreground), F. J. Moore, AMM3c, and Lieut. John W. Heim, Assistant Maintenance Dispatch Officer.

The office itself looks like a branch stock exchange. Blackboards bearing number, location and general status of every plane in the Wing fill three bulkheads. Telephone and inter-com "squawk boxes" feed information from ten different sources. Men take it down and relay it to the constantly changing blackboards.

Amid this scene the officers on duty decide how they can best meet the new flight schedules set monthly by ComNATSPac Staff. They set up an operating diagram of all arrivals and departures. The big problem is to take each plane off the old schedule, provide the time required for maintenance, and then send it out on the new schedule without unnecessary loss of flight time.

Another complication is a lack of spare planes in the event that an airplane is grounded. When it appears that this will happen, a duty officer calls the VR-10 Engineering Department. "Can you help us out on a substitute plane so we won't have to cancel this trip?"

Engineering may decide to concentrate work on a plane originally not scheduled out until noon the next day. Putting on extra mechanics, they get it out some ten hours ahead of time. It makes the trip in place of the grounded plane, which, in turn, may be ready to fly the next day.

"It's the men in the hangar ---the mechs and metalsmiths---

(Continued on page 18)

SPARE TIME SCIENTISTS COLLECT MUSEUM ITEMS

IF, AT A NATS UNIT on some tiny Pacific island you see men running around with butterfly nets, it may not mean that they're rock-happy. They may be members of the "bug circuit" of spare-time naturalists who are collecting previously unknown insects and plant specimens and sending them to American museums and laboratories.

Two members of the group are VR-11 navigators ---Lts. (jg) W. H. Wagner and D. F. Grether. At layover points along the routes which they fly, they collect specimens and keep in contact with hobbyists stationed on the islands.

Another is John T. Conover, RM3c, of a NATS unit in the Marianas. Conover collects and studies specimens, and preserves them for shipment to the

D. F. Grether

W. H. Wagner

COLLECTORS IN ACTION

Bishop Museum in Honolulu, the University of Hawaii, the University of California and the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. He tests rare herbs in hopes of discovering some new medicine or drug, bearing in mind that research such as his broadened the knowledge of the medicinal qualities of penicillin, agar and curare.

Together, Wagner and Grether have sent back some 450 specimens, and they have another 250 ready to ship. Their specimens include moths, dragonflies, ferns, lichens and orchids collected in the Marshall, Admiralty, Marianas and Hawaiian Islands. Most of them will go to the Smithsonian Institute in Washington.

Lt. Grether, a former plant-science instructor, has turned in a new kind of butterfly, the "skipper," which is puzzling National Museum officials. His fern collection varies from tiny, filmy plants with quarter-inch fronds to the giant bird's-nest fern, found from 20 to 50 feet high in trees, with fronds ten feet long.

Grether and Wagner divide their specimens among the Smithsonian Institute, the University of California, and the University of Pennsylvania, where Wagner was studying for an M.A. in natural science before the war.

They are working in the Pacific with:

J. Daigre, former Southern conservationist now collecting butterflies in off-duty hours at his Seabee unit in the Marianas;

A cook in the Admiralties who built himself a jeep and takes off into the hills in search of rare beetles;

And a Navy flier who collected 3000 butterflies on Guadalcanal.

At the NATS Unit Honolulu, T. C. Russell, PhMic, and Lieut. W. M. Herms, in the Quarantine Office, are "bugologists" in connection with their regular work of disinfecting aircraft. They have collected types of insects never before reported in Hawaii---proving that bugs, too, have gone modern and are traveling by air.

The Pacific is, for the most part, unfamiliar to American students of plant and animal life. Of the estimated 100,000 types of insects living on NATS-touched atolls, fewer than one tenth have been studied in scientific research. Radioman Conover declares that the Marianas Islands literally abound in rare and untested types.

With no foreseeable limit to their pursuits, these bug and plant hobbyists are snowballing their off-duty endeavors into something of great scientific value.

FIVE NATS MEN ARE WOUNDED

FIVE NATSmen were wounded in January at a NATS unit in the Philippines during an enemy air raid.

Lieut. Clyde Williams of ComNATSPac Staff and four enlisted men of the VR-12 advanced-base unit there---F. J. Schwabe, AMM3c, Albert Wager, AMM2c, O. D. Williams, S1c, and E. T. Sexton, SpV3c---were peppered with bomb fragments as they raced for foxholes during a Jap low-level attack.

An anti-personnel bomb exploded a few feet away from tents of the NATS unit, riddling the canvas as well as wounding the five men.

They were given treatment as ambulatory patients for flesh wounds which were not serious in nature. Bits of shrapnel were extracted from their legs and bodies.

Squadron

NATS-PACIFIC'S "SHELLBACK SQUADRON" ON THE EQUATOR

VR-13, NATS-PACIFIC'S youngest and most unique organization, is the Naval Air Transport Service version of a mobile squadron. Commissioned expressly for the purpose of giving logistic support to the most advanced areas, the "Shellback Squadron" schedules its operations to meet the needs of the rampaging Seventh Fleet.

Thirteen's new administrative and maintenance headquarters have reached the settling-down stages at a base in the hot and sultry Admiralty Islands. Despite the energy-sapping climate, all hands are waging a successful struggle to keep their planes aloft. Spare parts are scarce, so ingenuity and hard work make up for the handicap.

Besides the combined tasks of maintenance and operations, self-sufficient VR-13 provides its own living quarters and mess for officers and men. Their screened quonset-hut camps lie side by side in a coconut-palm grove within sound of the Coral Sea surf along the jagged beach.

Lts. (jg) R. H. Block and C. R. Leslie of the Supply Department procure food as well as aviation supplies, feeding a SeaBee outfit, the VR-12 NATS unit, and transient crews in addition to their own squadron personnel. They supervise a ship's service and small stores, and are setting up a VR-13 laundry.

With twin-engined Douglas R4Ds and four-engined RY Liberators for equipment, the Shellbacks shuttle their routes from Sydney in Australia to Leyte in the Philippines. Flight crews on northbound trips eat K-ration chow and often sleep beneath the wings of their planes. But on the other end of the line, there's the reward of several days of lay-over in Australian cities.

This fast-moving outfit was commissioned at Alameda last June, equipped at Oakland, reinforced in Hawaii, flown to Australia for temporary basing at Brisbane, and moved recently to the Admiralties to center its headquarters along its routes.

The squadron went piece-meal from Brisbane to its new headquarters bordering on the equator, accomplishing the 2100-mile shift without a halt in flight operations. The trick was done by sending

LIVING QUARTERS---Quonset huts in a coconut-palm grove near the field furnish living quarters as cool as possible in the ever-present heat.

TEAMWORK---VR-12 handles cargo and passengers for all NATS planes operating into the Admiralties. Here's the passenger terminal, next door to a chapel.

ON GUARD---R. E. Biggs, ACMM, and his platoon of VR-13's unique striking force stand ready for inspection after their regular daily drill.

VR-Thirteen

OPERATES 4500 MILES OF ROUTES ON NATS FRONTIER

OPERATIONS---VR-13 flies Douglas R4Ds and RY Liberators on its Australia-Philippine routes. It is the only NATSPac squadron using Liberators.

PRECIOUS CARGO---Fourteen Army nurses and one lone male passenger board an R4D to make the trip by air to an Army base north of the Admiralties.

HOME ON THE RANGE---Steward's Mate Edward Wright puts his all-Negro striking-force platoon through target practice on the VR-13 firing range.

a few departments at a time, leaving skeleton forces to carry on while the forerunners established themselves. VR-13's planes had already been using the advanced site, and a special group under Lieut. Frank (Judge) Sims bargained for living quarters and hangar equipment. The supply officers, last to leave Brisbane, came up with a cargo-shipful of 1000 tons of heavy equipment ---some of which is still being uncrated.

Comdr. Jack Thornburg was Thirteen's original C.O., but was ordered back to the States soon after reaching Australia. Lt. Comdr. Clifford Lamplough was acting skipper until Comdr. V. A. Dorrell, former head of VR-3, took over in December. Lt. Comdr. W. M. Hawkes is executive officer.

A veteran NATSman as well as a pioneer pilot, Comdr. Dorrell was executive officer of VR-1, the first NATS squadron, when the nucleus of the vast Navy airline system was formed. Called to active duty as a lieutenant in February, 1942, he helped commission and develop the Norfolk-based squadron.

In June, 1942, he went to Kansas to begin the organization of VR-3, assuming command of this squadron upon its commissioning. He was appointed to the rank of commander in August, 1943. Now with his third NATSPac squadron, Comdr. Dorrell ---whose logbook records 9000 commercial hours and 2000 with the Navy---is blazing new trails.

There are ten stops strung out along VR-13's 4500 miles of routes---some stops being staffed by VR-13 and others by VR-12 personnel. At the Admiralty headquarters, a VR-12 unit with Lt. Comdr. Kent Davis as OinC handles passengers, cargo and also flight-control operations.

In territory checkerboarded with Jap-held points, VR-13 maintains a "striking force" of two platoons to stand emergency guard and help defend the base in case of attack. The men, being trained by Lieut. Blase Miatovich, athletic officer, drill daily and practise marksmanship on the VR-13 target range. Flight crews, too, carry side arms.

Like other NATSPac squadrons, VR-13 is growing ---pushing its routes forward with the march of reconquest, unfolding new pages in the ocean-flying history of the Naval Air Transport Service.

AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION---Expert technicians of a SoPac malariology unit stem the malaria menace at its source---the breeding places of mosquitoes. Ensign W. B. Hull and assistant of the Admiralties unit direct natives in spraying a stagnant pool.

MALARIA CONTROL GROUPS PROTECT HEALTH OF NATS

CASES OF MALARIA are about as rare as frostbite among the hundreds of NATSmen on the hot and humid stepping stones to Tokio, and they have one of the unsung divisions of the Naval Medical Corps ---the SoPac Malariology Units---to thank for their freedom from this dreaded mosquito-borne disease.

Victory over the anopheles mosquito, the genus that carries the malarial parasite, has necessitated a far more rugged and resolute campaign on most of the islands where NATS operates than that involved in cleaning out the Japs, for without the results of this significant triumph NATS would never have been able to accomplish the magnitude of the work it has done.

Typical of the units that are saving lives and protecting health is one operating in the Admiralty Islands, where NATS' AirTransRon Thirteen is based. One officer and five pharmacist's mates (technicians), employing native labor in the field, prosecute a relentless struggle against the noxious mosquito, which claimed more victims early in the war than did Japanese gunfire.

Picks and shovels, chemical sprays and a research laboratory are the weapons of these front-line specialists. Their primary mission is to identify the anopheles mosquito---any of the 262 varieties ---by laboratory reconnaissance and to neutralize every conceivable breeding place by drainage and spraying.

The preventive measures taken against malaria include everything from spraying the swampland by airplane to seeing that the men roll down their sleeves after dark. Steps are taken to advertise every hazard.

Ensign William B. Hull, entomologist in charge of the unit, estimates that about 50 percent of the military personnel stationed in the Admiralties area might be down with malaria within six weeks after arrival, if it were not for the control work.

All hands of VR-13 and the VR-12-manned unit there take a daily dose of atabrine, the little yellow pill always staring you in the face in the chow line. It tends to give you "atabrine tan" ---a slightly orange complexion---but it is poison to malarial parasites which might be colonizing in your bloodstream.

The daily ration of atabrine, a synthetic substitute for quinine, gives only partial immunity from the parasite, but if symptoms develop, increased doses can fight off the disease.

According to Ensign Hull, it doesn't hurt you to get the hypo from an anopheles unless the malarial parasites in his proboscis are the right age---from 10 to 14 days old. You might furnish several hundred meals to mosquitoes before a bite is lethal . . . but then again, the first nip may do the damage.

If traces of malaria develop, the technicians run smear tests of blood to identify the disease. Besides fighting malaria, the unit cooperates closely with local medical officers in sanitation work, eliminating filth and killing off flies and rats.

As a result of the magnificent yet glory-less work of these specialists, each man on steamy Pacific islands has gained an increased life-expectancy. Illness or death from tropical disease is almost as remote from him as when he was on Main Street back home.

DECORATED

FRED FIGUEROA, AMM2c, and Robert W. McConkley, AMM3c, of VR-2, have received the Gold Star in lieu of a second Air Medal. Both earned their decorations in combat squadrons before joining NATS.

Lt.(jg) W. K. Kirk, VR-11 assistant materiel officer, and Herbert Schultz, ARM3c, VR-11 first radioman, have been awarded the Purple Heart. Lt. Kirk was wounded in the Marshalls before being attached to NATS. Radioman Schultz was hit by Jap bomb fragments at a WesPac advanced unit.

RATED, ROTATED AND PROMOTED

HIGHLIGHTING the list of promotions for this month is Comdr. W. F. Peterson, VR-10 skipper, who received his appointment to the scrambled-eggs bracket in January after the Packet had gone to press.

Fifty-three other officers added half-stripes to their sleeves, and 16 men donned CPO rates during February. Sixty-four added new chevrons.

On the Wing's rotation program, 46 men were transferred to duty in the States, and 16 were given NATSPac overseas duty from VR-2.

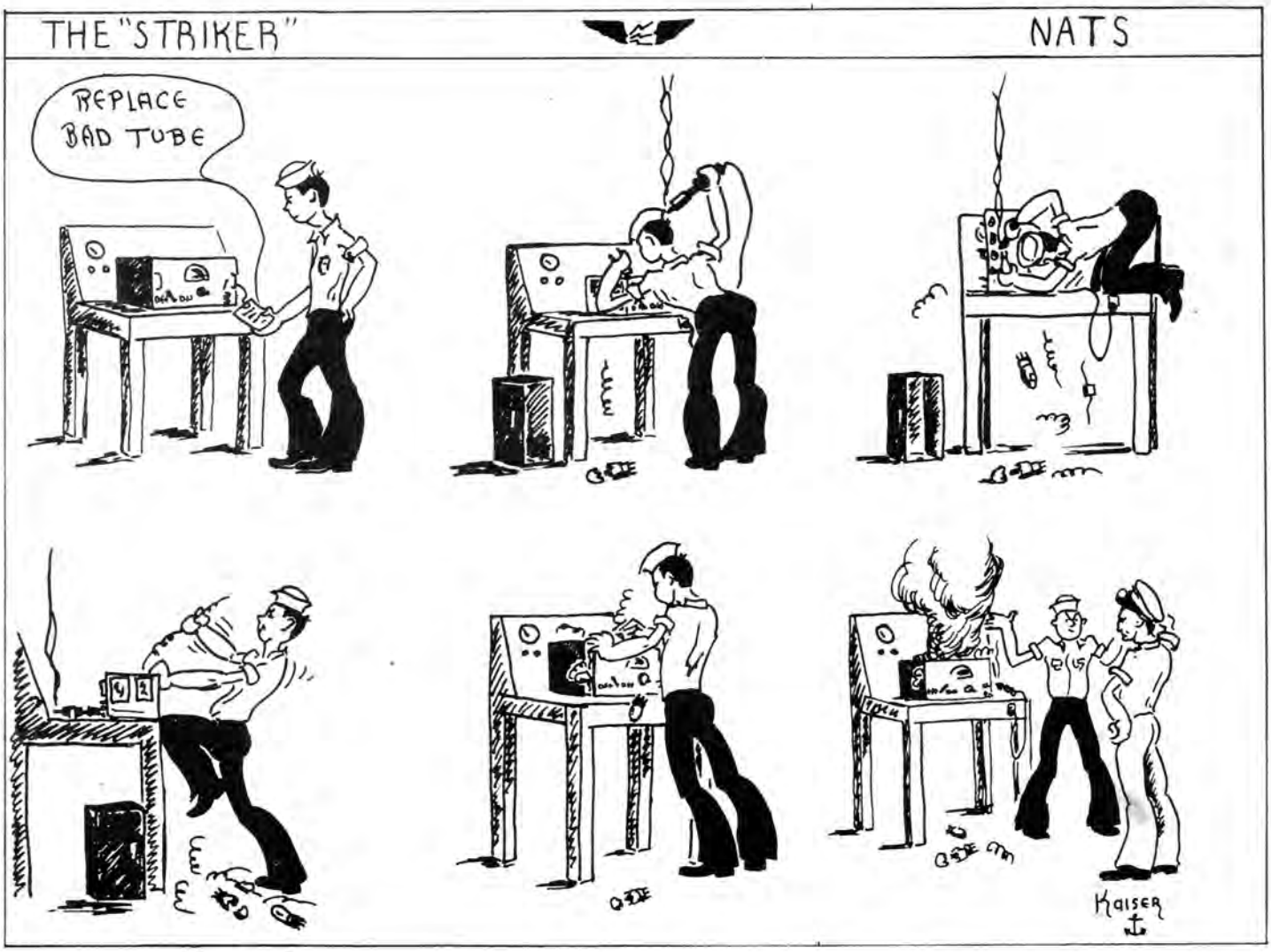
	STAFF	VR-2	VR-10	VR-11	VR-12	VR-13
LIEUT.	0	0	0	19	0	2
LT.(jg)	0	1	3	8	17	3
CFO	0	1	10	0	5	0
PO1c	0	3	3	1	6	1
PO2c	1	4	1	4	9	1
PO3c	1	2	12	2	6	7
ROTATED	0	16	40	6	30	0

Tabulated figures on those rated, rotated and promoted appear in the box below:

The new lieutenants in VR-11 are: W. R. Ruess, W. T. Greig, W. M. Snyder, A. S. Robinson, H. M. Thorpe, D. H. Payne, V. F. Davies, R. F. Stuhr, H. E. Prinz, R. E. Cullers, C. E. Rogers, L. F. Bachrach, W. B. Scobey, E. R. Jensen, J. S. Kirkman, J. H. Parker, J. R. Corcoran, T. H. Clemmitt and R. E. Poole; of VR-13: D. O. Cameron and W. R. Elder.

Promoted to lieutenant (jg) are E. F. Kaspar of VR-2; J. R. Downey, W. J. Litwin and Richard Goff of VR-10; S. Scott, Jr., A. E. Spanyard, C. C. Scharf, E. F. Wood, J. F. Walsh, J. P. Keating, W. W. Van Sickle and R. A. Stade of VR-11; R. D. Martin, S. A. Cogswell, E. A. Conner, Jr., M. H. Manley, W. R. Thomas, C. B. Weber, J. R. Clark, C. G. Ellington, Robert Biederman, W. J. Laird, S. T. Quigley, H. C. Paist, D. J. Benjamin, F. G.

(Continued on page 17)



Meet the Chiefs

LOUIE PAUL HAS EARNED A NAME AS VR-10 MASTER MECH

THEY CALL Chief Louie Paul the "Man on the Hot Stove" in VR-10, where as master mech and leading chief of the NATSPac maintenance squadron he makes every minute count.

He's spark plug to more than 700 dungareed sailors who service and repair scores of NATS sea- and land-planes. Personally, he's as big and as colorful as the tag-line he has earned on his job.

Paul's story begins in Russia, where his family were blacksmiths for more than four centuries in the Odessa region. When the Revolution of 1906 came, the mere fact that their clientele was aristocratic put the Paul family on the wrong side of the political fence, so they escaped and wound up in Duluth, Minn.

Louie Paul

Louie's father resumed his profession as equine pedicure, but Louie went into the auto business with his Uncle Julius. The uncle had invented a gadget to raise a car's axle in case of tire trouble by pushing a dashboard button. The device in action looked like a dog stopping at a fireplug, but it proved impractical anyhow and failed.

Louie's first aviation job came after he had finished high school in 1921. He was a grease monkey in the maintenance crew of a converted ex-Navy flying boat operating on Lake Superior. In a natural turn to Naval aviation, he enlisted in 1927 and went to Pearl Harbor the next year.

It was on his first Pearl duty that Louie had his literal baptism in fire. He was mech on a T3M when the plane caught fire off Diamond Head. But for the skillful handling of the plane by the pilot, Louie would have been roasted alive. The pilot himself was badly burned and, after the plunge into the sea, Paul managed to get him out of the cockpit and save him from drowning. Each man was rewarded for saving the other's life by the choice of a decoration or promotion. The pilot chose the latter, but the practical Paul took the promotion.

Louie made chief in 1940 and was in on one of the early mass flights by PBYs across the Pacific. In 1943, he went to VR-11 as leading chief and then transferred to VR-10. He plans some day to raise bulls on a Texas ranch, and swears he won't do an hour over 30 years in the Navy.

JIM WHEELER GOES AFTER TROUBLE AND FINDS PLENTY

A CHIEF of spectacular achievements is Jim Wheeler, 23-year-old ACMM and engineering-department head at a NATS unit in the Marianas Islands. His specialty is trouble-shooting aircraft engines and Jap-shooting is his pastime.

Wheeler was one of the NATS pioneers in that section of the Pacific, and ever since the Japs staged a night attack to regain an airstrip on which NATS had begun operations the day before, he has had a personal grudge against the toothy little men. He borrowed the rifle and grenade belt of a Marine who fell dead beside him and has doubly avenged his mate's death. Unconfirmed kills aren't counted.

Jim Wheeler

The first Jap victim was silhouetted on a ridge more than 100 yards away. The second was met face to face on a rocky trail---the wiry chief beating him to the trigger. Wheeler's favorite sport was rooting in the caves among the hills where plenty of Japs were holed up. Once the Marines killed a dozen Nips in a cave the chief had just emerged from. Another time, Wheeler found an entire Jap civilian family and turned them over to the authorities.

Despite these exploits, Wheeler's fame as a Jap-killer is only secondary. He is known throughout the Marianas Islands for his uncanny knack for trouble-shooting and can diagnose engine misbehavior simply by listening to the trouble described. NATS pilots rely heavily on his word in accepting their planes for flight. "If Wheeler says they're all right, we'll fly them," one pilot declared.

At 23, Wheeler has six years in the Regular Navy, recently realizing his ambition to become permanent-appointment chief. He had been a PBY mech at Pensacola, making temporary-appointment chief soon after his crew changed all four engines on an admiral's R5D in eight hours.

The most startling thing about this chief is his toothless grin. He lost the front top row in an automobile accident, suffering also a broken neck and back. He owns a dental plate but vows not to wear it until he gets to the Philippines.

And Wheeler is looking forward to that day---when he can add more notches to his rifle stock.

"What's in a Name?"

WHEREVER VR-11 officers and men are gathered, throttle that desire to yell, "Hey, John!" even though that's your pal's name. You might get trampled in a rush, as complement figures show 78 "Johns" attached to the squadron.

Also, hold it down on the "Hi, Bill" stuff, because there are 70 Williams in VR-11. Robert is a fair third, and James, Charles, Richard and Frank trail in that order.

As for the last names, the Johnsons have it. The squadron has 20 Johnsons, half that many Smiths, and 10 Jones boys.

Speaking of last names, VR-11 is a colorful outfit; there are WHITE, BLACK, BROWN and GREEN.

Want to discuss movie stars? On the roster are BLONDEL, LAMAR, ABBOTT (but no Costello), ROONEY, HOLT, SHORE, TAYLOR and MILLS (one of the famous brothers?).

HOWE do you like geography? We have a PORTUGAL, an ENGLUND and a SCOTT, who might also be regarded as a literary figure like PYLE, OPPENHEIM, WELLS, LEWIS and BROWNING.

Speaking of WELLS, the unit has WATERS, a MARSH, POOL and a LAKE, where you can watch the SWANN. You can find FERNS in a FOREST, as you WAIDE the BROOKS in pursuit of the WILEY HERRING with SPEARS. You'd see lots of CITRON and IVEY with LONG ROOT, although this may VARY.

Have a HART and SOULE, Mister, you wouldn't hit a GUY in the BRAIN with your HAND, would you?

MAYBEE I can find a post-war job for you. Are you a COOK, a PLOWMAN, a BAKER, SADLER, BUTLER, COLLIER, FISHER, MERCHANT, WEAVER, SEAMAN, FOWLER, COOPER, GARDNER or a STAMPER?

I hear your VILLA is up on a HILL, and I would like to see your CHAMBERS. Do you have KEYES for the LOCKE on your GATES? From this HALL, you have a wonderful view of the WHEAT FIELD and DYKES.

I'm hungry. What, you have a cold BIRD and some HAM? GOOD. Can you STUHR me something in a GLASS? I know, let's tap that KEGG you bought last week. Let's hang up our COATS so we won't have to HUNT for them later. BLOW me a tune on your FIFE. Then I think I'll take a KNAPP.

Some CROOK will probably get HARSH about this story and want to LYNCH me. Wouldn't I look NICE with a LILLIE on my chest--or playing a HARP?

The squadron has a WOLFF, a FOX, a STAGG--also a DRAKE. Just in case you don't know it, we also have a KING, while a BISHOP maintains a high moral tone.

When you go SOUTH, you follow the nautical path of the famous explorer, COOKE, who battened down the HATCH and took his FLEET out here with only the MOON and VEGA to guide him.

And of course you read the comics--Winnie WINKLE and Lil Abner YOKUM and Elmer TUGGLE.

This is RUFF as a COBB; I must have been in a blue FUNCK when I wrote it. But, if you've read this far, you're STUCK.

Pigeon Flies Pacific ...via NATS

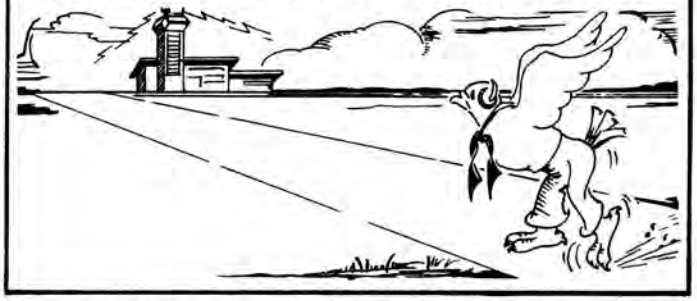
"THIS PIGEON is considered as naval personnel and is to be accorded treatment as such."

That was the admonition marked on a crate which rode a VR-2 Coronado to the West Coast recently.

Inside the crate was a somewhat bewildered carrier pigeon which had arrived in Hawaii aboard a warship where it had landed during a storm. Released from a Navy blimp out of Moffett Field, Calif., to deliver a routine weather message to a shore station, it was carried westward by heavy winds. It was nearly exhausted when it found rest on the ship's gun turret.

The ship's captain had the feathered message-toter delivered to the Office of Naval Intelligence in Hawaii. After it was flown to Alameda, VR-2's Transportation contacted Moffett Field for delivery instructions.

Moffett authorities merely asked that the bird be released to find its own way home. After official clearance from the NAS operations tower, the pigeon took off for Moffett Field.



STATESIDE SQUADRON

VR-2, BASED AT ALAMEDA, is so far away from the rocks and sandpiles on which some NATSPac people live that it is sometimes forgotten in the Pacific picture. But VR-2 is very much a part of the invisible chain with which NATS has wrapped up the ocean Japan tried to call her own.

VR-2, the Stateside Squadron, is the only Pacific outfit operating the PB2Y-5Rs that slide into the bays, lagoons and rivers from Alameda to Brisbane and Honolulu to Saipan. VR-2 also operates the Martin "Mars," but of course this small (70 tons---soaking wet) aircraft carries only 25 passengers and 25,000 pounds of cargo between the States and Oahu.

The Alameda end of NATSPac not only flies its planes but also maintains them. Minor overhaul and routine maintenance are done in two hangars at Alameda, whereas major overhauls are pulled in the old Pan-American hangars on famed Treasure Island, complete with statues of the San Francisco Fair. VR-2 engineering claims that, with two more Wave mechs, it could build a Coronado.

Incidentally, VR-2 is the only NATSPac squadron equipped with Waves. Some of the rock-happy rotation boys have been known to faint upon coming out from under a cowling and finding a blonde swinging a spanner on the topside. But they soon get used to it, for the Waves are good mechs---and good gals, too.

Duty with VR-2 is rugged. The nearest liberty towns---Oakland and San Francisco---are a full half-hour from the station. Dehydrated eggs, sawdust spuds and dried seaweed are well-nigh unobtainable. Tents are so scarce and hard to get that most people have to live in houses. Due to the manpower shortage in the Bay area, women are frequently a nuisance, and squadron personnel usually stay aboard in preference to exposing themselves to these wolfesses.

In view of this deplorable situation, we wonder sometimes why people sweat out the rotation deal. However, during the past two months, 158 reluctant rock-dwellers have been rotated to VR-2.

COMMUNICATIONS — — — LINK BETWEEN PLANES AND UNITS ON GROUND

ONE SIGNIFICANT REASON why NATS is able to operate a complex system of far-flung schedules is found in its efficient and highly trained communications department.

NATS-Pacific Wing Communications, under the direction of Lt. Comdr. A. A. Gray, USNR, comprises over 35 officers and 700 enlisted men, whose sole job is to maintain communications with the hundreds of NATS planes that carry vital priority goods, to keep a constant check on their whereabouts and to transmit changes in orders from Operations.

If the navigation officer is the pilot's eyes, then the radioman is his ears. A NATS plane may be headed for a certain place that has been retaken by the enemy, and if it weren't for communications, his precious cargo, plane and crew would be captured ---a shift in materiel that could prolong our advance and cost scores of lives. But the radioman must be constantly on the alert in picking up messages. Each operator has a touch as distinctive as his voice, and if the radioman doesn't recognize the touch, he doesn't answer.

Although NATSPac radiomen seldom see action, they were the first of NATS personnel wounded (by bomb fragments) at Manus. There are tales of daring and heroism, too. Lt. (jg) Claude Nelson, USN, now in VR-2, was shot down in the Philippines shortly after Pearl Harbor. He was a radioman then, flying in a combat plane. With other survivors, he made his way to Australia by canoe and native boat. They were missing 90 days.

Exclusive of mail clerks, who are a story in themselves, the enlisted men of Communications have four different rates: radioman and ground technician, aviation radioman and aviation radio technician. The aviation men form a closely knit team, for the radioman of the operating squadrons depends upon the technician of the maintenance squadron to keep his equipment in tip-top shape.

The go-between for the aviation radioman and his mate on the ground is the Joint Airways Communications Service of the Pacific (JACSPac), which is in direct contact with the plane, transmitting messages to and from the ground radioman for Operations. JACSPac furnishes all primary ground communication facilities for NATSPac.

A large proportion of the officers and men of NATSPac's Communications have had considerable radio experience in civil life. Many owned their own shops. Lt. Comdr. Gray himself, who calls

(Continued on page 18)

NATSU NOTES

ADMIRALTIES

Down in the Admiralties, SpVs Jack Peters, Ernie Brown, Norman Reid, L. F. Luck, John Willis and Seaman Marvin Hogan may know the angles of air transportation, but 30 miles of travel by sea had them plenty worried.

Their excursion to a little island near the NATS units turned into high adventure when the line-handling boat engine broke down.

Supposedly on a fishing trip, the skylarking sextet had slipped ashore for a pleasant day as guests of friendly natives. Somehow, they didn't notify the Australian civil authorities---or anyone else---about their social call.

But when time came to go home, they couldn't get the boat started, and when darkness fell, their alarmed shipmates sent out search planes and patrol boats.

Peters and Reid, in the meantime, had borrowed a native outrigger canoe, and by paddling all night at the risk of being mistaken for enemy prowlers, managed to reach the home base by dawn.

A crash boat was sent to bring in the rest of the marooned party, and no grave repercussions resulted ---although the lads did "volunteer" to do a few extra chores.

SCHOUTEN

VR-13 might have added an Army B-25 to its plane roster if an ATO at a NATS unit in the Schouten Islands had been less cynical.

On a sultry afternoon as the ATO awaited a plane arrival, a forlorn and perspiring Army lieutenant ambled in with an armful of papers.

"Do you want a B-25?" he blurted. "The outfit it belongs to is broken up. I've got my orders back to the States, but I can't go until I get rid of this [censored] B-25, so for Pete's sake sign here and take it off my hands!"

The ATO, with Navy-inspired skepticism and visions of complications for "theft" of Army property, turned the gift down, although the lieutenant virtually got down on his knees.

About an hour later, the engineering officer of another activity ran into the NATS office waving papers and hilariously yelling that HE had a B-25!

NEW GUINEA

While an airstrip was being repaired at NATS Unit Hollandia, temporary offices were set up in a tent close beside an alternate runway. Things went well until a giant Army bomber revved its engines and the propwash blew the tent over. Arriving plane crews of VR-13 found the ground unit knee-deep in canvas and hard at work beneath the blazing New Guinea sun.

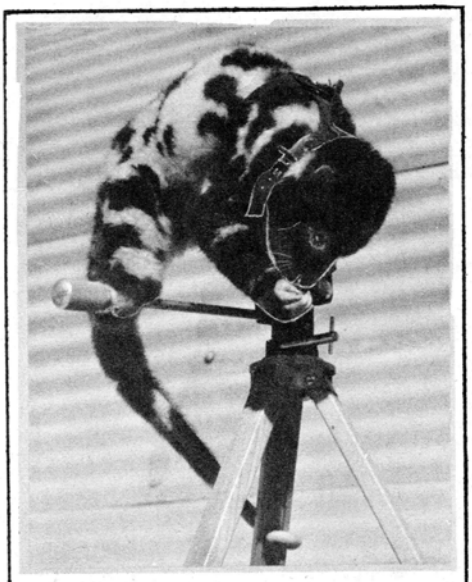
Amid the wreckage stood one table, where a transport airman was typing traffic forms, while another answered the telephone.

PALAU

In the earlier days at NATS Unit Peleliu, quarters were so scarce that transiting plane crews who spent the night slept beneath the wings of their aircraft. VR-13 included cots and blankets as a regular part of the plane's equipment. The latest word is that the transients are now provided with tents.

You may have read about the "Gopher" in the newspapers, but NATSmen on Peleliu knew this famed Jap sniper well. He fixed the NATS tents in his telescopic sights several times before the Marines drilled him between the eyes after his own peculiar fashion.

The nearest the Gopher came to hitting any NATS unit members was the time he shot a SeaBee visitor through the "lower and fleshy regions of the back."



WHAT IS IT?

THE men of VR-13 don't know the Latin for him---all they know is that the natives brought him around.

But you can see, from that pose on the cameraman's tripod above, that he has a prehensile tail like a monkey and the general outlines and characteristics of an American opossum.

There are differences, though, in case you're a 'possum-hunter. This Admiralty Islands marsupial has a shorter snout than his American cousin's. His fur is deeper and softer and striped with brown.

PROMOTIONS . . .

(Continued from page 13)

Olson, R. E. Ponsford, R. L. Lincoln and E. W. Nommensen of VR-12; and H. C. Womack, F. P. Kelly and B. T. Kirkpatrick, Jr., of VR-13.

Advanced to chief petty officer are J. B. Gilligan, ACRM, of VR-2; C. E. Griffin, W. N. Nelson, W. L. Paul, C. R. Roach and J. T. Turner---all ACMM, F. M. Brigance and E. D. Shotwell ---ACM, M. L. Brown, ACMMI, and Milton Smith, ACEM, of VR-10; and H. H. Hollinger, ACMM, A. E. Priddy, Jr., C. C. Theobald---CMoMM, C. W. Jarvis, CSpP, and B. A. Coleman, CSpV, of VR-12.

DOWN UNDER FOR A NIGHT

ADELAIDE STREET, BRISBANE---the street with more American servicemen than Aussie civilians . . . a girl can't help but be allowed the honor of an escort . . . dogfaces predominate tonight and it takes quick maneuvers by a sailor to outflank the aggressors . . . I ain't been so lucky, so I staggers up to the Coconut Grove (no mere pub for me with that extra ten percent) in hopes of making a contact there . . . this joint attracts more uniforms than a blonde on King Street in Honolulu . . . maybe it's because it has neon lights in front, I'm thinking as the shore patrol frisks me for that certain stuff . . . I hands the doorman my fourpence ticket, stifle a belch and manage to get inside without stumbling . . . I looks around and sees nothing but sailors, dogfaces, girls, sailors, dogfaces, girls . . . these babes are special, too . . . they're all jitterbugs with a capital jit . . . they can jit you under the table and make you know it . . . the music ain't Harry James, but I . . . oops---I'm sorry, duchess, very sorry indeed, I says as I goes into action . . . whatcha say to a l'il groove-digging in the deck? I asks . . . sure to be sure, she says, and snaps me into position for the kill . . . suddenly I realizes my arm ain't long enough to go around her . . . 'ave yer gawt a yonkee cigaret? she purrs . . . sure to be sure, I says, himitating 'er bloody Aussie tawk . . . intermission . . . I'm beginning to sober up a bit and finds myself sweating a two-ton job if ever I seen one . . . Gawd! . . . musta been stone blind when I bumped into her . . . all of a sudden, somebody hollers bloody murder and all I can see is SPs trying to separate dogfaces and sailors . . . the music starts again---and when the fighting don't stop, the national anthem is played . . . that does it . . . now, this baby hippo I'm sweating . . . I bury my head in my hands . . . you can't be particular, y'know, I says to myself . . . so I sweats some more . . . huh? . . . what's that? . . . she's gotta go, she says . . . gotta make that last tram home . . . well, how d'ya like that! . . . hell, might as well go back to the base myself . . . the cold fresh air burns my throat . . . I'm beginning to think of home now . . . thinking of mom 'n' dad 'n' sis . . . and Janie, too . . . geez, I'm tired . . . Janie, I don't like all this . . . but it's war, see? . . . ho hum . . . think I'll crap out on the ferry deck . . . never get my blues clean again anyway.

---JOHN J. ALBANES

COMMUNICATIONS . . .

(Continued from page 16)

Bluehill, Maine, his home, began his radio career way back in 1924, when radio was little more than a plaything for amateurs.

Again at NATS, Lt. Comdr. Gray was in on the ground floor. He had made his first transpacific flight in 1935 with Pan American, but when he entered NATS in May, 1942, there were only six radiomen (and three airplanes) in the whole Pacific Wing.

Today the Hedron Communications Office alone handles an average of 1100 messages a day---more than 10,000 code groups. It takes an average of only seven minutes and 15 seconds for this office to process a message.

"We are proud of the achievements of our men," Lt. Comdr. Gray said. "If there's something 'in the air,' you can be sure they'll get 'the word'."

MAINTENANCE DISPATCH . . .

(Continued from page 8)

who really pull us out of the tough spots," Maintenance Dispatch officers declare.

Some planes leaving Hawaii will be in the air for as much as 50 hours, with fewer hours on the ground, before their return. At VR-12 units along the way, mechanics keep the plane in shape with their limited facilities until it comes back to the maintenance squadron.

Maintenance Dispatch also prepares planes for special flights such as extra sections and secret missions. Since these planes must be pulled off regular schedules, there's another problem in re-scheduling them back into the planned flight pattern.

Lieut. Thomas started the office with Lieut. W. E. Reeves, now of VR-13, as assistant. They began partly from a verbal description of a vaguely similar system used by a commercial airline. At first they scheduled maintenance work on PBMs alone. Now with a backlog of valuable experience, the gradually enlarged office handles maintenance scheduling and dispatching for all R5Ds and PB2Ys in the Wing.

Each month NATSPac's operations increase, and Maintenance Dispatch integrates the job of providing more plane-hours by trimming minutes off overhaul time and adding them to utilization time.

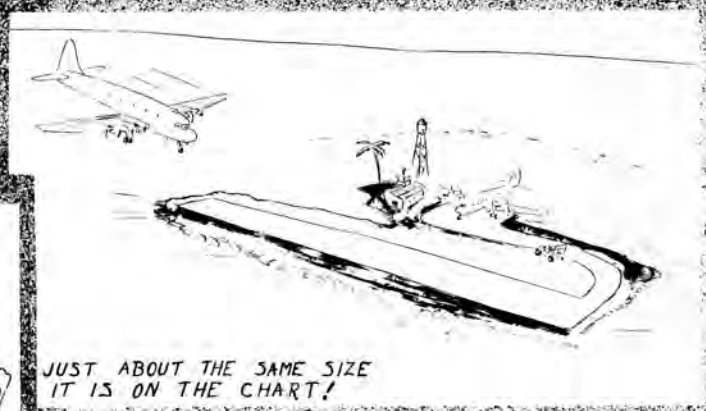
Between October and December, 2.6 hours were added to the daily flight time of every airplane in the Wing. This is equivalent to nearly 500 miles more distance that each plane could cover. And that, in turn, is translated into more tons of valuable cargo hauled across the Pacific.

Those are the kind of results that Maintenance Dispatch is getting as coordinating agency for the gigantic team which makes such improvements possible.

NAUTICAL BUT NATS

THE NAVIGATOR

As J. James sees him



JUST ABOUT THE SAME SIZE IT IS ON THE CHART!

"OF COURSE, WHEN HE STARTS PLOTTING THOSE STAR SHOTS, THAT'S ANOTHER THING ENTIRELY."

"SO NOW YOU FIND YOUR MISTAKE IN THE HOWGOZIT!"

NATS PACKET PINUP